

DRAMA

New Series

MAY M'CMXXII

Number 18

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The International Theatre Exhibition

will open at the

Victoria and Albert Museum

On SATURDAY, JUNE 3rd.

To Celebrate the Occasion

A PUBLIC BANQUET

will be held at the HOTEL CECIL on the preceding evening, Friday, JUNE 2nd, at 7.30 p.m.

LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN will preside.

SPEAKERS :

THE RT. HON. H. A. L. FISHER, M.P.,

SIR CECIL SMITH,

MR. GORDON CRAIG,

MR. J. FISHER WHITE,

President of the Actors' Association.

MR. H. GRANVILLE-BARKER.

Tickets, price 15s., may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary of the British Drama League, 10 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

Early application is advisable as the number of seats is strictly limited.

For particulars of the Drama League Lectures in connection with the Exhibition see over-leaf.

Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 1s., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.,
10 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C.

FREE TO MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

A COURSE OF SIX LECTURES

will be given in connection with the

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE EXHIBITION

at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington,
at 5 p.m. as follows:

TUESDAY, JUNE 6th,

Mr. GORDON CRAIG, "The International Theatre"

Chairman: Sir Cecil Smith

TUESDAY, JUNE 13th,

Mr. H. GRANVILLE-BARKER, "Co-operation in the Theatre"

Chairman: Lord Crawford

THURSDAY, JUNE 22nd,

Mr. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, "The Evolution of the Theatre"

Chairman: Miss Lena Ashwell

TUESDAY, JUNE 27th,

Sir JOHN MARTIN HARVEY, "The Actor in the Theatre"

Chairman: Viscount Burnham

TUESDAY, JULY 4th,

Mr. JOHN DRINKWATER, "The Dramatist in the Theatre"

TUESDAY, JULY 11th,

Mr. BASIL DEAN, "What goes on Behind the Scenes"

Chairman: Mr. Norman Wilkinson

Members desiring free tickets for the course should apply at once to the Hon. Secretary of the League, 10 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2. These tickets will not be transferable. Non-members can purchase tickets at 2s. 6d. for each lecture or 10s. 6d. (not transferable) for the course. Apply to the Hon. Secretary as above.

POINTS FROM MR. GRANVILLE BARKER'S SPEECH AT STRATFORD

I AM all for the use of drama in schools—for the playing of Greek plays and Shakespeare and modern plays by school children . . . even as a part of the curriculum. For their learning to write plays, as part of the curriculum.

All for Village Drama . . . Community Playhouses . . . and the Pageant . . . and any other conceivable form of dramatic activity. But one of the ends I see to all this activity, though it be not one of the ostensible objects, is the creation not of perfect bodies of dramatic artists, but of a perfect audience . . . for the perfectly performed play in the ideal theatre . . . as far as human limitations will enable us to produce any of these things.

At the present moment the theatre, with its material ready, is waiting for an audience to appreciate the best it can do, and is meanwhile very often doing its worst instead, as being more appropriate to the taste of its patrons. This is not to say that a minority audience with taste for as good as the theatre can give it, does not exist. But in the present theatre system—or lack of system—by which a livelihood is made, *the minority has no rights*.

No, the thing that the theatre most needs to-day is an educated audience . . . educated in the dramatic sense. That may be an audience of *villagers*—will be if the village drama goes ahead.

I grant that the professional theatre as it now stands cannot be thought of as an educational institution. You do not provide a young man or woman with the completest dramatic education that they need by giving them a fortnight's run of the London theatres at the moment.

I see a chance of other theatres springing up which will better answer the purpose . . . but they will not answer it *accidentally*. You cannot found an institution for one purpose and expect it to answer another.

If you plan a theatre to make money, it ought to make money . . . and everything else it may do will be purely incidental. It does not matter whether you plan that it should make much money or little . . . you have given it that object in life.

If you want a theatre to be representative of the best in drama, and in that sense to be

an educational institution, you must found it and direct it with that purpose only.

We look for the National Theatre, which shall have one purpose only . . . we have been looking for some time.

Curiously enough, within the last six months I have begun to have more hopes of its coming into existence than ever before.

If I am right and it does come to exist in the next two or three years, it will be a great lesson in the disregard of *material difficulties*.

Ten years ago, when I was on the Committee, there need have been no financial obstacle that could not have been surmounted. What the financial position is now, I need not remind nobody. And the cost of the theatre will have more than doubled.

But I seem to discern a really genuine desire for the National Theatre . . . for two or three dozen such theatres. I believe that this genuine desire, conducted into the proper channels, if not now, very shortly, will be potent enough to raise half a million pounds.

Meanwhile, for our educational purpose, other methods of study than those that are to be found in the present theatre must be thought out.

The whole question of a dramatic performance to me is one of enriching the few thousand written words of the dramatist beyond common recognition by the art of the actor and the cultivated apprehension of an accustomed audience.

I will not now debate the question as to the extent of the actor's contribution . . . as to whether he can add anything, or should try to, to what the dramatist has imagined . . . but that he can add much to what the inexperienced reader can derive from the written word, of that there is no doubt.

That the greater actor can add so much more than the lesser as to make his contribution seem different in kind than in degree, of that there is little doubt.

And that a sympathetic audience will encourage an actor to finer and more expressive work—work which again will differ almost in kind from any that will be understood by audiences ignorant of his art—of that I personally have no doubt at all,

THE GREENLEAF THEATRE

By Herbert Davies

AMERICA applied the term "Synthetic Drama" to the methods of the Greenleaf Theatre taught and practised by Constance Smedley and Maxwell Armfield. What does the term mean? It is to the art of acting what tuning is to an orchestra, balance of composition to a picture, combination to a football team, maraschino to a fruit salad. The theatre appeals to many sides at once—to the ear, the eye, the emotions and the brain: and yet the appeal is one. Many media of expression are used in making the appeal, colour form, sound movement: yet the art is one. Recognise therefore the unity underlying the art of acting. Add to all these that elusive element which turns the whole to beauty and your production flashes into success; for you have caught and satisfied that need for rhythm of which we are only beginning to recover consciousness. One arrives at perfection by various roads: one road is the elimination of the superfluous. Think of the stage as you know it, of some actors you know, of your friends when they act, of yourself when you practise your part before a pier glass, and cut out meaningless movement, indistinct speech, exaggerated gesture, signs of self-consciousness, and you see what vistas of improvement open. Another method is co-ordination: voice, tone, body poise, the expression of the features, all have their part in the work and can do it completely only if completely harmonised. Again, what we call atmosphere is created partly by the personality, the thought-power of the actor—but it depends also on the design and colour of costume and stage setting. The art of harmonising these elements to a complete expression is the art of the theatre: the Greenleaf Theatre is notable among a dozen vital movements working to the same end.

It was founded in London in the early years of the war, when Maxwell Armfield and Constance Smedley set to work to develop with a company of trained actors, among whom were Bridges Adams and Muriel Pratt, the theories of dramatic art which they had applied to two experimental forms in Gloucestershire. The first was an historical pageant illustrating the local life

of mid-Gloucestershire in phases and episodes from the time of the cave dwellers to the middle of last century. Each episode was carried out under direction of a local group of craftsmen and players formed in each of the villages which radiate along the valleys and over the hills of the Cotswolds from the hub at Stroud where the valleys meet. A more permanent institution followed in a company of Cotswold Players, a band of enthusiasts who took the Armfield plays in their setting of scenery and costume to village audiences. This society still flourishes and has become an integral part of the community life of the county.

The Universities of America offered a wide field for missionary work in drama, and the Armfields, after establishing their company of Greenleaf Players in New York, have spent the past five years in lecturing and producing plays at American Universities and Settlement Centres. The charm of their work and its peculiar appeal to the community worker may be readily understood from one of their production programmes: it embraces a series of English Folk Songs and Dances, a Persian idyll treated in the Theocritean manner, and an *Aubade* or Dawn Song from the tenth century *Chansons de Geste*. All these sides of their work will be illustrated at the summer school to be held at Stroud, the heart of the Cotswold country, in August and September.

The school is planned for author, producer and actor. It is meeting an eager welcome from Community Players in England, for it offers a means of supplying a universal need, "the need to capture by art the beauty of life." That is the motive which explains the awakening of to-day in England, of which the signs are everywhere. Plays are being written for which there is no easy way of experimental production; in every town and village there are groups of eager players who need only right direction to set them on sound lines of training and self-development; in all forms of social service and community life, it is being realised that true living is the key to the problems of the time and that the play way is the way to learn to live. All these various needs will find in the Greenleaf School the

training that they need: they will find in each other the solution of their separate problems. The school will be a self-governing community: each class will work out its own progress on independent lines and will carry out in groups original enterprises to be analysed, discussed and criticized in turn.

Constance Smedley will direct two classes, a programme class for producers and a stage class for actors. Maxwell Armfield will be responsible for stage craft and design: there will be special classes for children held by Annie Macdonell and Joan Rayner. The needs of civic workers and club leaders will be met by a course on the

organisation of community drama. Various technical matters of stage management, lighting, photography, printing, publicity, will be dealt with by lectures from experts, among which will be one on posters by J. MacKnight Kauffer. Dance will be taught by Katharine Whincop, of the Ling Association, the English Folk Dance School and the Margaret Morris School of Dancing. The work of the classes will be put to the test of experience during the production weeks, which will follow each part of the course. Each class will cost 5s. a week: all particulars can be obtained from Arthur Blanch, Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.

DE MUSSET IN GOLDERS GREEN

By H. F. Rubinstein

It is quite time that this country discovered the "comedies et proverbes" of Alfred de Musset, if for no other reason than that they are among the greatest plays ever written. I would, however, urge two special considerations before a *British Drama League*. First, that, like the plays of the Elizabethans, and, unlike those of any other Frenchman, they grow like flowers, and not at all like mathematical formulas. In many of them, there are genuine echoes of Shakespeare... which brings me to my second claim for them. One day (presumably), "Il ne faut jurer de rien" will be produced—and quite the most glaring robbery in the highways of literature exposed. Practically every one of the characters of "The Importance of Being Earnest" have been lifted out of that play, to say nothing of the fact that the whole prose dialogue of Wilde and his school is just so much naturalized De Musset. These things will out—rightly so—and all honour to the Play and Pageant Union of the Hampstead Garden Suburb for paving the way with four performances of "No Trifling with Love" (April 27th to May 1st). What a play! The story of Camille and Perdrian, like that other of Celimene and the Misanthrope, remains eternally true—true, at any rate, for the duration of human society. And the brilliant technique—the lightness and sureness of touch—touches as of a rapier at the heart—the action pro-

gressing in swift waves, tragic and comic by turns, receding one before the other, as the issue fluctuates between these two extremes, culminating in a wild spurt at the end—"anybody's race"—until the sudden stab of the last line (a favourite device of De Musset's). Chopin knew how to play these tricks in music. But the secret belongs to life. A veritable problem-play for the producer! His first concern must be for the *tempo*: the scenes follow one another almost tumultuously (there are no "curtain" lines before that final stab). Messieurs Jewitt and Bishop, joint producers at Hampstead, by the manipulation of a simple curtain, secured at once the necessary speed, and the doubtless equally necessary economy. It would be ungenerous to cavil at some of the acting. Moreover the Union comprises a training school, so that one may expect a very much higher standard before long. It is to be hoped, by the way, that the training extends beyond the mere speaking of parts. For a romantic play, deportment is almost equally essential, and here was perhaps the most marked defect in the production. With the exception of Miss Isobel Lowman, who was indeed admirable alike in her diction and her carriage, there was a general awkwardness in the movements of the company which suggested that this factor had perhaps been overlooked in an otherwise careful and highly creditable production.



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

President:

LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN.

Chairman of the Council:

H. GRANVILLE BARKER.

Hon. Secretary: GEOFFREY WHITWORTH.

Hon. Treasurer: ROBERT MOND.

MSS. for publication in DRAMA will be considered if accompanied by stamps for return if unsuitable. All Enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, at the Offices of the League, 10, King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.

Telephone: GERRARD, 3157.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal

THE Third Annual Meeting of the British Drama League is fixed for Thursday afternoon, June 29th. Particulars of the time and place will be given in our next number, but we take this opportunity of announcing the fact to our readers in the hope that as many members as possible will be in London for that occasion and will make a point of being present. The notices which appear on other pages of this magazine will make it abundantly clear that the League has taken a great stride forward during the past twelve months. If our position is to be maintained and improved, the support of our own members in moulding the policy of the League is very much to be desired, and the annual meeting affords the best opportunity for registering the opinions of our members and their desires for the League's future.

The chief executive authority of the League is the Council, and it is of vital importance that the Council should thoroughly represent the rank and file of the League's members. According to our rules one third of the duly elected members must retire annually. There are already two vacancies on the Council which means that at the

annual meeting there will be twelve places to be filled up. The rule dealing with the election of the Council runs as follows:—

“All nominations for vacancies on the Council shall be in writing, signed by two members of the League as proposer and seconder, and accompanied by the consent in writing of the candidate to serve as a member of the Council if elected. The nomination and consent must be sent to the Secretary on or before June 1st in each year.”

Would any members who have candidates to propose kindly note?

In connection with the visit of the Comédie Française to London on May 28th, Lord and Lady Howard de Walden are kindly giving a reception on behalf of the Drama League at Seaford House on Sunday evening, May 28th, at 11.30 p.m. This reception is primarily in honour of the historic French Company, the members of which playing in London will be present. Any member of the Drama League who desires an invitation to this reception can have one on application to the Hon. Secretary of the Drama League.

The Dramatic Section of the Polytechnic School of Speech Training, is giving a new play “Dido and Andas,” at King George's Hall, on June 1st. The play has been written by one of the students and the play is being produced by the students who are themselves designing and making the dresses, etc. The Principal of the School, Miss Louie Bagley, is very kindly extending invitations to any members of the League who would care to attend. Applications should be made to Miss Bagley, at 15, Langham Place, W.1.

Since the last issue of the magazine the following Societies have affiliated to the League:—

Burnage Garden Village Amateur Dramatic Society,
Charles Eastwood, Esq.
Central Commercial School Players,
Miss Adeline Gay.
Dramatic Section Polytechnic School of Speech
Training, Miss Louie Bagley.
Girls' Grammar School Clitheroe Literary Society,
Miss P. Stafford.

A FOREIGN THEATRE TOUR

To the Editor of DRAMA.

DEAR SIR,—In regard to the proposed tour of certain theatres of Central Europe in the summer, mentioned in the last issue of *DRAMA*, I shall be glad if you will allow me to make one or two comments.

The idea arose out of the fact that, having been to the Continent several times recently, I have been asked by some friends if they might accompany me on the occasion of my next visit. I shall be happy to extend the invitation to members of the British Drama League, provided it is understood that I cannot say in a round sum exactly how much such a tour will cost, since the exchange and hotel-prices vary from month to month. While ordinary commodities, food, theatre-tickets, etc., are absurdly cheap, hotel accommodation is an uncertain quantity, owing to the various foreigners' and travellers' taxes. But in any case the whole cost would be far less than that of a similar holiday tour in England or France.

I am free to travel from the end of July till the middle of September. The tour might be arranged to take in Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, Oberammergau, Salzburg, Vienna, Prague, Dresden and possibly Berlin, and Cologne or Amsterdam.

Although August is not the best month for the theatre abroad, in Frankfurt, Munich and Oberammergau there are almost daily performances throughout the month, a special festival of the drama and opera is to be given in Salzburg from August 13th to 29th; and Prague, Dresden and other places re-open for the autumn season towards the end of August.

It has been suggested that, the month of August presenting some difficulty, it would be well to postpone the whole tour until the Christmas holidays. This may still become the better course to adopt, although I have every intention of spending six weeks of the summer on the Continent, and can do no more than invite those who would see something of the Continental drama, to accompany me. I do not propose to emulate the elaborate arrangements of a Cook's personally-conducted tour. Members would be free to join and leave the party when and wherever they chose.

One further point may be of interest. I have been asked in Prague, Dresden and

Frankfurt, if among the members of the proposed party sufficient could be found to form a cast for the performance, during the visit, of an English play. Costumes and scenery would be ready to hand. If any members of the dramatic profession would like to combine an inexpensive and varied holiday with the opportunity of presenting in English, to delighted Continental audiences, a Shaw or Galsworthy play, let them now come forward!

Yours sincerely,
W. H. KERRIDGE.

NORTH LONDON GROUP.

One of the most ambitious societies affiliated to the Drama League is that known as the North London Group, who have lately given a performance of "The Wandering Jew," with Mr. Frederic Tomlin in the title part. In choosing such a play an amateur society is obviously setting itself an extremely hard task. The play is far from being one that acts itself and in fact one cannot but be aware after seeing an amateur performance of it that it depends perhaps more largely on the adventitious aids of the scene designer and costumier than on its intrinsic merits as an acting play.

In the earlier scenes, Mr. Frederic Tomlin's performance was remarkably telling. Mr. Matheson Lang one feels, had he been present, would have found much to praise. With more practise and experience, Mr. Tomlin would doubtless have been able to conserve his force for the final episodes in which he showed some slight trace of physical exhaustion. Miss Alice Noble was a tempestuous and heartfelt Judith. I liked Mr. Godfrey Bond's Raymond and Miss Manley was a charming Olalla. These actors are not afraid of the romantic test and one would like to see them try a simpler and better play like "Poalo and Francesca."

The Oxted and Limpsfield Players have a set of purple curtains which they are willing to let out on hire to affiliated societies of the League for the sum of £1 1s., plus carriage both ways for one week. There are:—2 curtains 16 ft. wide x 10 feet high; 3 curtains 12 ft. wide x 10 feet high; 2 flys 2 ft. wide x 24 feet long.

NEWS FROM NORTH & SOUTH

HULL SHAKESPEARE & PLAY- GOERS' SOCIETY.

The above Society held its well-attended annual meeting at the Dramatic Academy, Hull, when the President, Mr. T. Sheppard, M.Sc., was in the chair.

The Secretary's report showed that plays read during the session included "The Return of the Prodigal," by St. John Hankin, arranged by Mr. L. M. Clark; "Hedda Gabler," by Henrik Ibsen, arranged by Miss Constance Clark; "John Gabriel Borkman," by Ibsen, arranged by Mrs. James Downs; "The Medea," by Euripides, arranged by Mr. E. M. Appleton; "Sweet Lavender," by Pinero, arranged by Mr. Charlton Morton; "Androcles and the Lion," by Mr. G. B. Shaw, arranged by Miss C. Byers; "Antony and Cleopatra," by Shakespeare, arranged by Miss Sibley, Miss K. Griffin and Miss M. Ross; "All for Love," by Dryden, arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Priestly Cooper.

Mr. E. Haworth Earle also gave an interesting lecture on "The Dynasts"—Thomas Hardy; and Mr. Bryon Downs, M.A., delivered a very scholarly address on "Ibsen." The Society arranged an ambitious syllabus for the past session, and it was recorded with satisfaction that this had been carried through.

In addition to the foregoing programme, "Fanny's First Play" was read by the members to the Literary Club, and "The Return of the Prodigal" to the Dickens' Fellowship. Both these readings were appreciated by the Societies named.

The Society had the honour of rendering assistance to Sir Frank Benson during the fortnight his company appeared in Hull last year, and the members taking part were congratulated by him for the admirable manner in which his stage instructions were carried out.

An innovation was a joint excursion of the Hull Literary Club and this Society, made in June last, by motors, to Burton Agnes. The President conducted the party round the historic hall and church. It was proposed that a similar excursion of interest and pleasure should take place this year.

The members of the Committee have for some time been considering the possibility

of arranging a dramatic performance, so that yet further successes may be added to the Society's past achievements. It was hoped that something definite would be arranged towards the end of the session. Those members wishing to take part were asked to communicate with the officers.

As a whole the year just completed was regarded as very encouraging. Committee meetings had been well attended. Many new readers had been introduced, and every play given had been exceedingly well organized.

During the session thirty-one new members had been elected, making the total current membership considerably over one hundred. It was pleasing to note the marked improvement in the attendance.

The Treasurer's report and balance-sheet was further evidence of the progress made by the Society during the past year.

BUXTON BRANCH OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE.

The Buxton Branch of the British Drama League is to be congratulated on beginning its dramatic career by a good example of the intellectual and decorative play, instead of falling victims to the prevalent type of commercial play, even if Mr. Sladen Smith's "Bazhouka Meets the Gods" makes demands on the actors which they did not altogether fulfill. For this the absence of men in the male parts was largely responsible. The Prince needs much stronger playing than Kathleen Flanagan was able to accord it; she was a very engaging princess in male attire. As the Prince is the centre of the play the effect was generally to water down Mr. Sladen Smith's wine, and the irony of the whole thesis scarcely "got." Angela Lopez, as Gobryas, the Cuckoo Man, was distinctly good, and Alison Roberts as Nipunika, the black wench, gave an admirable performance. All the other parts were creditably taken, though it is to be hoped that the Branch will be successful in attracting a few men actors. It is perhaps significant that for Lord Dunsany's, "The Lost Silk Hat," the men were forthcoming, presumably they felt that "Bazhouka" was too "high-browed" for them; they preferred the amusing but much more common-

place sketch of Dunsany's. It is a pity. By-the-by the "Heavenly Nymphs" (Ada Frood and Edna Roberts) were delightful nymphs, but their dance was very disappointing. The costumes made a charming piece of colour, but the back-scene was too realistic. A fantastic text requires a fantastic setting.

Mr. Erie Shaw struck us as the best in "The Lost Silk Hat." Mr. Raymond Sutcliffe can certainly act, but he was not farcical enough for the Poet.

Altogether an excellent start, and we hope that the Branch will go on in the way they have begun, and avoid wasting their energies on the stuff beloved of the usual amateur dramatic society. L. S. JAST.

THE ASHBURTON GROUP.

Mr. Thomas Dekke's pleasant comedy, "The Shoemaker's Holiday," was produced on April 29th and May 1st, by the Ashburton Group.

The play, on account of its setting and period (1599), is naturally an ambitious undertaking for amateurs, but the members of this group are wonderfully enthusiastic, and the result was an undoubted success. The mirthfulness of this jolly play, and the excellent situations it contains, were caught in the true Elizabethan spirit, reflecting great credit on the producer, and affording intense amusement to the audience.

The art of acting is an art of movement, the object is to "get across," and this was done effectively in spite of a very small stage. This was particularly so in the studies of Mr. W. H. Ottaway, as Simon Eyre, the shoemaker; Mr. Seymour Marks, as Fick; Miss Alice Herring, as Margery; and Miss Edith Brown, as Sybil. But there I am, specializing. The whole group worked hard, the entire production being a piece of real, sound team work, and everybody's success was due to this fact.

Mr. Siviore Levey, producer of the play, pianist, and singer of the delightful Elizabethan songs, is an ideal leader, and much credit is due to his work.

The staging of the play could only be simple on such a small stage, but the simplicity made an ideal background for the costumes so cleverly designed by Miss Miriam H. Nunn. R. SAMUEL PICKLES.

LIVERPOOL.

The Liverpool Pioneer Players is a society formed with the object of producing plays that are literature, and reviving old-time productions that demand true historic art; since the inauguration of the movement in 1920, no less than twenty-four plays have been produced, the choice has been a most catholic one and has included authors ranging from Thomas Buchanan to Bernard Shaw. Most of the productions have been for the first time in Liverpool, while a number have been for the first time on any stage. The Society, which is run under the direction of Edward P. Genn and Osmond H. Bateman, present their final productions at the Crane Hall, Liverpool, on May 17th, when Mr. Frederick Watson's new comedy, "Another Sentimental Journey," and W. Basil MacDonald Hasting's three-act comedy, "Love—and What Then?" will be presented.

During the summer months a Shakespeare Reading Class is being held weekly, prior to their first Shakespearian production which is down for next season.

THE OXTED AND LIMPSFIELD.

The presentation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by the the Oxted and Limpsfield Players (affiliated to the British Drama League), at Oxted and Limpsfield, last month, was made notable by the exceptionally good acting of the principal ladies. They outshone the men. Miss Mona Brock mirrored a perfectly fascinating "Hermia," with fine poise of delivery, modulation of voice, and transition from tenderness to anger. As "Helena," Miss W. Mills matched Miss Brock.

If only these ladies had been partnered with lovers equally ardent and emotional!

One of the most bewitching scenes was the dance by the fairies. Trained by Miss Adams, it was a personal triumph for her and the child actors.

The wonder of the production was not so much the standard that the players as a whole did not reach, as the standard they did reach. Fronted with the difficulty of miserably inadequate stage room at all the presentations, it reflects the greatest credit on Mrs. Gordon Whitmore that she so successfully overcame her handicap.

N. G. IFE.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE.

Since the St. Mary's College Dramatic Society came into existence nearly seven years ago, having for its inaugural dramatic performance scenes from "Villette" and "Nicholas Nickleby," it has made great strides, giving its best and most ambitious performance when it presented "The Tempest" in November last. Among its other bigger productions, it includes "Arms and the Man," "Quality Street," "Miss Elizabeth's Prisoner," and "A Winter's Tale"; among its smaller, Yeats' "The Hour-glass" and "The Land of Heart's Desire," Oliphant Down's "Maker of Dreams," and Synge's "Riders to the Sea."

Two years ago it became an affiliated society of the British Drama League, and was the first Training College Society to do so. Those who have watched its movements carefully can see how it must have had a kind of prescience of sections 284-298 of the Board of Education's recent report on "The Teaching of English in England," which deals with the drama as an educational activity.

One of the lectures in English to whom the Society owes its being, and who of recent years has made a special study of the theatre and drama, acts as producer. Under her the Society (co-opting on special occasions other members of the staff) endeavours, among various projects, to carry out at least two of the recommendations in the memorandum of the British Drama League drawn up at a request of the Board of Education last December (1920), *i.e.* :—

- (i) Practical dramatic work in relation to the literary curriculum of the year's work.
- (ii) Co-ordination of all the artistic activities of the students in the production of good dramatic performances.

The plays chosen are in general those which have received sanction both as literature and as acting drama. The aim of the Society is not to provide "mere" amusement (an Entertainment Committee exists for that purpose); and so it can direct its attention to the cultivation in the students of an appreciation of what is best in drama. Several considerations guide the Society in its choice of plays—beauty of language,

vividness of dialogue, strength of characterisation, and romance of plot.

Elocution and character-interpretation receive special attention, and as much time as possible is given in the Art Classes to designing for stage properties and costumes, for lighting and make-up, and for stage-grouping and setting. The students derive much profit and pleasure from preparing the plays, and many go out of College with a love for good drama and an enthusiasm for the dramatic method in teaching.

In conclusion, it can be said that the very strong recommendations of the Board's report for speech-training and dramatic performance are being actively and earnestly carried out by the Society. A Director-Artist, like Dr. Walford Davies or Mr. Cecil Sharpe, naturally claims much for his particular art, as having the most ennobling influence on the national education and life; the Executive of the Dramatic Society, while inspired by the ideals of both, puts its greatest faith in drama as in great part comprehending and transcending them.

"It was in no inglorious time of our history that Englishmen delighted altogether in dance and song and drama, nor were these pleasures the privilege of a few or a class. It is a legitimate hope that a rational use of the drama in schools may bring back to England an unshamed joy in pleasures of the imagination, and in the purposed expression of wholesome and natural feeling." (Section 291 of B. of E. English Report).

The following donations have been received for the Theatre Exhibition Fund since the last issue of the magazine :—

Mrs. Granville-Barker	...	£25	0	0
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The title of the Musical and Dramatic Society Ashby de la Zouch, was incorrectly printed in the March number of DRAMA. The correct name of the Society is Musical and Dramatic Society, Staunton Harold.

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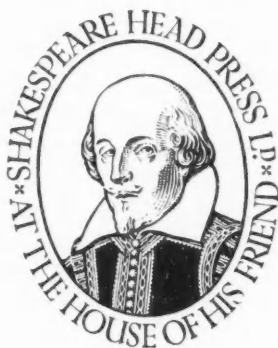
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